



PINELLAS SUNCOAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY
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**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MINUTES – JUNE 22, 2016**

The Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) Board of Directors met in regular session in the Board Room at PSTA Headquarters at 9:00 AM on this date with the following members present:

Darden Rice, Chairperson
Julie Bujalski, Vice-Chairperson
Janet Long, Secretary/Treasurer
Joseph Barkley
Doug Bevis
Mark Deighton
Ben Diamond
Dave Eggers
Samantha Fenger
Pat Gerard
Patricia Johnson
Bill Jonson
Brian Scott
Kenneth Welch
Lisa Wheeler-Brown

Also Present:

Brad Miller, CEO
Alan Zimmet, PSTA General Counsel
PSTA Staff Members
Members of the Public

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairperson Rice called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM and the Board was led in a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Walter Slupecki, St. Petersburg resident, urged the Board to purchase a few electric buses. He spoke about Routes 59 and 9 and requested later service to accommodate riders who work a late shift.

Deborah Lekenta, Neighborly Care Network, thanked the Board for approving the Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) contract and continuing to serve the Heritage Presbyterian Apartments.

Betty Niles, Pinellas Park resident, commented on the Route 444 schedule that serves the Walmart, adding that if you miss the bus, you have to wait two and a half hours for the next bus. She pointed out that some riders are not able to walk the two blocks to 49th Street to catch the bus.

Carl Heissenbittel, Clearwater resident, spoke about adjusting the bus schedules to make better connections, especially on Route 19. He suggested that improvements be made to the Route 62 schedule to better accommodate people attending church.

RECOGNITION/AWARDS

Jeff Thompson, Director of Transportation, recognized and congratulated recently retired Shelbie Harris for her 35 years of service at PSTA.

NON-BOARD COMMITTEES

Transit Riders Advisory Committee (TRAC) – Elaine Mann, Committee Chair, reported on the June 14th TRAC meeting.

Forward Pinellas (Metropolitan Planning Organization - MPO) – Ms. Bujalski reported on the Forward Pinellas Board meeting that took place on June 8th.

MPO's Local Coordinating Board (LCB) – The LCB did not meet last month.

CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Long made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bevis to approve the Consent Agenda. There were no public comments. The Board unanimously approved the Consent Agenda, which included the approval of the May 25, 2016 Board meeting minutes, the wheelchair restraint system contract, and the MPO transit planning grant.

ACTION ITEMS

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Central Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Funding – Cassandra Borchers, Chief Development Officer, announced that the BRT project is moving forward. She said the Florida Transit Administration (FTA) approved PSTA's request to advance the project into the Project Development (PD) phase of FTA's Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program. Ms. Borchers indicated that the PD phase will cost approximately \$700,000 with FDOT providing \$500,000 and PSTA contributing \$200,000. She said staff is recommending approval of the FY 2017 FDOT Central Avenue BRT Joint Participation Agreement (JPA) and adoption of Resolution #16-06. After Mr. Zimmet read the Resolution by title, Ms. Long made a motion, seconded by Mr. Barkley to approve the JPA and adopt Resolution #16-06. There were no public comments. Motion passed unanimously.

October 2016 Service Improvements – Ms. Borchers presented maps showing the proposed service changes on Routes 61, 62, Dunedin/Palm Harbor Connector, Route 66, the Jolley Trolley, the Oldsmar/Tampa Connector, and Route 19. She provided public comments stemming from recent public engagement and spoke about the major areas of public concern. Ms. Borchers presented revisions to the proposed route changes based on public comments. Once the service changes are approved, there will be public outreach efforts from July to October. Mr. Welch reported that the Planning Committee unanimously recommended approval of the service changes with the adjustments noted by staff.

In response to Chairperson Rice's call for public comment, Elaine Mann, Dunedin resident, spoke about the proposed elimination of service along Douglas Avenue in Dunedin, adding her opinion that the proposed Jolley Trolley route is not an acceptable alternative.

Christina Scherf and Jan Watson from Presbyterian Apartments, thanked the Board members for retaining service to the apartment complex.

Mr. Heissenbuttel pointed out that the people making decisions on the route changes do not ride the buses on a daily basis. He recommended that the Board members ride the buses for a month to experience how difficult it is to make connections.

Denise Deja, St. Petersburg resident, said she believes a lot of people will no longer go to Dunedin if the routes are cut. She also mentioned the Central Avenue Trolley in St. Petersburg, stating her belief that the Trolley should be re-routed off Beach Drive.

Mr. Eggers asked for clarification on the Dunedin routes. Ms. Borchers explained the changes and indicated that PSTA is continuing to speak with city staff regarding the routes. Mr. Welch pointed out that Ms. Mann's comments were not available when the Planning Committee made their recommendation.

Ms. Bujalski expressed concerns about eliminating regular bus service in Dunedin and replacing it with the Jolley Trolley. She is also concerned about losing service to the high school. Ms. Long suggested delaying the decision about service in Dunedin until more discussion can take place.

Mr. Diamond made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bevis to adopt all the recommendations for the service changes with the exception of all proposed changes relating to service in the Dunedin corridor, which will go back to the Planning Committee. Mr. Miller indicated that staff will meet with Dunedin Mayor Bujalski and city staff to discuss the route changes before the July 20th Planning Committee meeting. He stated that if an agreement cannot be reached, it will be placed on hold until the February 2017 service changes. There were no further public comments. Motion passed unanimously.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP)/Bus Purchase – Debbie Leous, Chief Financial Officer, presented information stemming from the June 15th Finance and Planning Committee meetings. She said there was discussion about purchasing two electric buses as part of the five replacement buses, as well as purchasing smaller, 35' buses. Ms. Leous presented the FY 2017 – 2021 CIP and highlighted some other key projects. She indicated that the Finance Committee voted 3:1 for the purchase of five diesel buses with the substitution of two electric based on receipt of grant funding or BP oil spill funding and the Planning Committee voted unanimously for the purchase of five hybrid buses with the substitution of two electric buses if funds become available.

Mr. Barkley reported on the Finance Committee's recommendation and Mr. Welch reported on the Planning Committee's recommendation. A few Board members had questions regarding the costs, fuel savings, and miles per gallon (MPG).

In response to Chairperson Rice's call for public comment, Barbara Haselden, St. Petersburg resident, submitted 350 Pinellas County resident signatures on a petition to buy smaller buses. She believes that it is wrong to use BP money to subsidize the purchase of electric buses.

Phil Compton, Sierra Club, submitted 625 signatures in favor of electric buses. He added that the Tampa Bay Zero Emission Coalition supports PSTA's use of the BP funds.

The following Pinellas County residents also expressed their strong support for the purchase of electric buses: Craig McCorkle, Lawrence Potter, Jeanette Young, Lucinda Johnston, Jasmina Forcan, Jim Iglar, Denise Deja, Susan McGrath, Dale Potter, Nancy Frainetti, Tom Krumreich, James Shirk, Rebecca Falkenberry, Kalen Hammann, Michelle Allen, Jennifer Rubiello, and Frank Jackalone.

Raemona Mae Clark stated her opinion that more shelters are needed. She pointed out that hybrid diesels are better than diesels, and that electric buses would be suitable for short routes, but not PSTA's longer routes.

[Ms. Johnson left the meeting at 10:51 AM and did not return.]

Ms. Long asked about leasing the batteries for the electric buses and Mr. Miller responded that staff has been in communication with Proterra, but more information is needed. Ms. Long said that Duke Energy is seriously looking to partner with PSTA. Mr. Eggers stated that the most critical issue is the short-term financial cliff that PSTA is facing in five years. Ms. Gerard stated her belief that the Board has received deliberately misleading information.

Mr. Barkley expressed his disappointment in the Finance Committee's decision to recommend purchasing diesel buses. Mr. Welch made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bevis to support the Planning Committee's recommendation to approve the 2017 – 2021 CIP and the purchase of five hybrid buses and substituting two electric buses if funding becomes available, set the fuel economy goal at 4.6 MPG, and to authorize the use of existing bus contracts with no additional votes.

After a few additional comments were made regarding the Authority's aging fleet and financial difficulties, the motion passed (12:2) with Mr. Eggers and Mr. Scott dissenting.

State Government Affairs Team Recommendation – Mr. Diamond stated that since he is now a candidate for the State Legislature, he believes it is prudent that he abstain from the discussion and voting on this issue. He turned the discussion over to Legislative Committee Vice-Chair Long. Ms. Long stated that the Legislative Committee unanimously recommended approval of the contract. Ms. Long made a motion, seconded by Mr. Barkley to accept the recommendation of the Legislative Committee. Mr. Miller said the recommendation is to award the contract to RSA Consulting Group, LLC who will be joined by Alan Suskey of Suskey Consulting. He noted that this is a savings of \$18,000.

[Ms. Wheeler-Brown left the meeting at 12:40 PM and did not return.]

There were no public comments. Ms. Long amended her motion and proposed that this contract be for a two-year period instead of three years with the option to extend. Mr. Barkley accepted her amendment. Motion passed (12:1) with Mr. Diamond abstaining.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Draft Fiscal Year 2017 Budget – Ms. Leous summarized the FY 2017 budget. She reported that the FY 2016 projections are strong with an anticipated \$767,921 surplus, which will be added to the reserves. She noted that this is the fifth straight year of substantial savings. Ms. Leous stated that the ad valorem tax will be discussed at the July Board meeting and the budget will be voted on in September after the two public hearings.

REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE

PSTA Performance Report/Updates – The report was supplied in the Board packet. Mr. Miller said ridership is down and staff is preparing on a presentation to the Finance Committee addressing this issue.

FUTURE MEETING SUBJECTS

The Board was provided with a list of upcoming meeting subjects. Mr. Miller highlighted a number of activities taking place in July including the July 12th County Public Hearing on the BP funds, the Floridians for Better Transportation conference on July 18-20, and the July 29th PSTA/Forward Pinellas joint meeting. He also said that PSTA will be part of the St. Petersburg PRIDE parade on June 25th.

[Ms. Long and Mr. Diamond left the meeting at 12:51 and did not return.]

OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was discussed.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Chairperson Rice thanked staff and the public for their input and comments.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairperson Rice adjourned the meeting at 12:56 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for July 27th at 9:00 AM.

Chairperson